Castle Rock
STATE PARK

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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The Park

Castle Rock State Park is located three miles south of Oregon, Illinois on Highway 2. The park is centrally located in the Rock River Hills region of Illinois, and its rolling topography is drained by the Rock River. The park is located along the west bank of the Rock River in Ogle County. The park is very representative of the Rock River Hills area with spectacular rock formations, deep ravines, and unique northern plant associations. A sandstone bluff, adjacent to the river, has given the park its name.

History

Illinois tribes of native Americans inhabited the region until 1730 when the Sauk and the Fox tribes, who were being forced westward by the colonists, invaded and inhabited the region. The native Americans called the river in the new territory "Sinnissippi," meaning "Rocky waters."

In the early 1800s the native Americans were again forced westward into Iowa. In 1831, Blackhawk, the Sauk chief, led his people in a series of raids back into Illinois to reclaim their ancestral lands. The battles that followed were known as the Blackhawk Indian wars. Chief Blackhawk was captured in 1832 and ordered to a reservation.

The Castle Rock area was settled by New Englanders early in the 19th century. This area was proposed as a state park in 1921 by the "Friends of Our Native Landscape," and they were able to acquire some of the land they described as "a unique wilderness remnant of great natural beauty and scientific interest." In 1964, the Natural Lands Institite, a non-profit natural lands preservation group, conducted a public fundraising campaign to preserve part of the Castle Rock area.

Castle Rock was recognized the the State of Illinois as an outstanding area of major scientific importance in 1965. It was established as a project area, and land acquisition by the State was started in 1970.

At the present time, Castle Rock consists of approximately 2,000 acres, 710 of wihch are designated as an Illinois Nature Preserve. The site was dedicated as a state park in 1978.

Natural Area

The basis for the acquisition of Castle Rock State Park is the protection of natural resources that are unique to Illinois. A thin layer of glacial till covers this region and several distinctive plant species, remnants of the native forest and prairie, still exist. In one valley, 27 different types of ferns have been identified. The park is one of the largest significant natural areas in the northern part of Illinois.

Most of the outstanding natural features are located in the dedicated Nature Preserve which is protected by state law. Use of the 710-acre preserve will be restricted to scientific study and limited interpretation activities.

Limitations

The planned development of Castle Rock centers around the Nature Preserve. All development is limited by soil types. Soil types consist of silt loams and fine, sandy loams which are connected with the general high degree of slopes which limit use and development at Castle Rock. These soils are subject to severe erosion under heavy use.

Castle Rock is a large sandstone butte situated between the Rock River and Highway 2. The rock is made up of St. Peter sandstone. There are only a few places in the state where St. Peter sandstone comes to the surface, even though it underlies practically the entire state of Illinois.

Facilities

Picnicking: There are three picnic areas available for use with shelters, picnic tables, playground equipment, grills, toilets, and drinking water. There are also scattered tables for use along the river. One of the picnic areas offers a beautiful view over the Rock River Valley. Two of the park's shelters may be reserved with a fee.

Trails: There are six miles of marked hiking trails developed at this time. These trails offer the opportunity to view woodland animals and birds that inhabit the park. The trails' scenic views also offer many chances for the photographers to sharpen their skills. More trails are planned with the park's development. Cross-country skiing and tobogganing are also available when weather permits.

Fishing: All the fishing is done in the Rock River. The park offers one and one-half miles of bank fishing. There is also a boat ramp available for public use. Boat size is limited due to the varying depth of the river. The most commonly caught fish is the catfish, but some bass, northern, walleye, and crappie may be taken.

Camping: Castle Rock does not have a campground except for a primitive canoe camping area. Access to the area is by canoe or boat only.

Hunting: Limited squirrel, turkey and deer hunting is available at the park. For more information, please contact the park office.

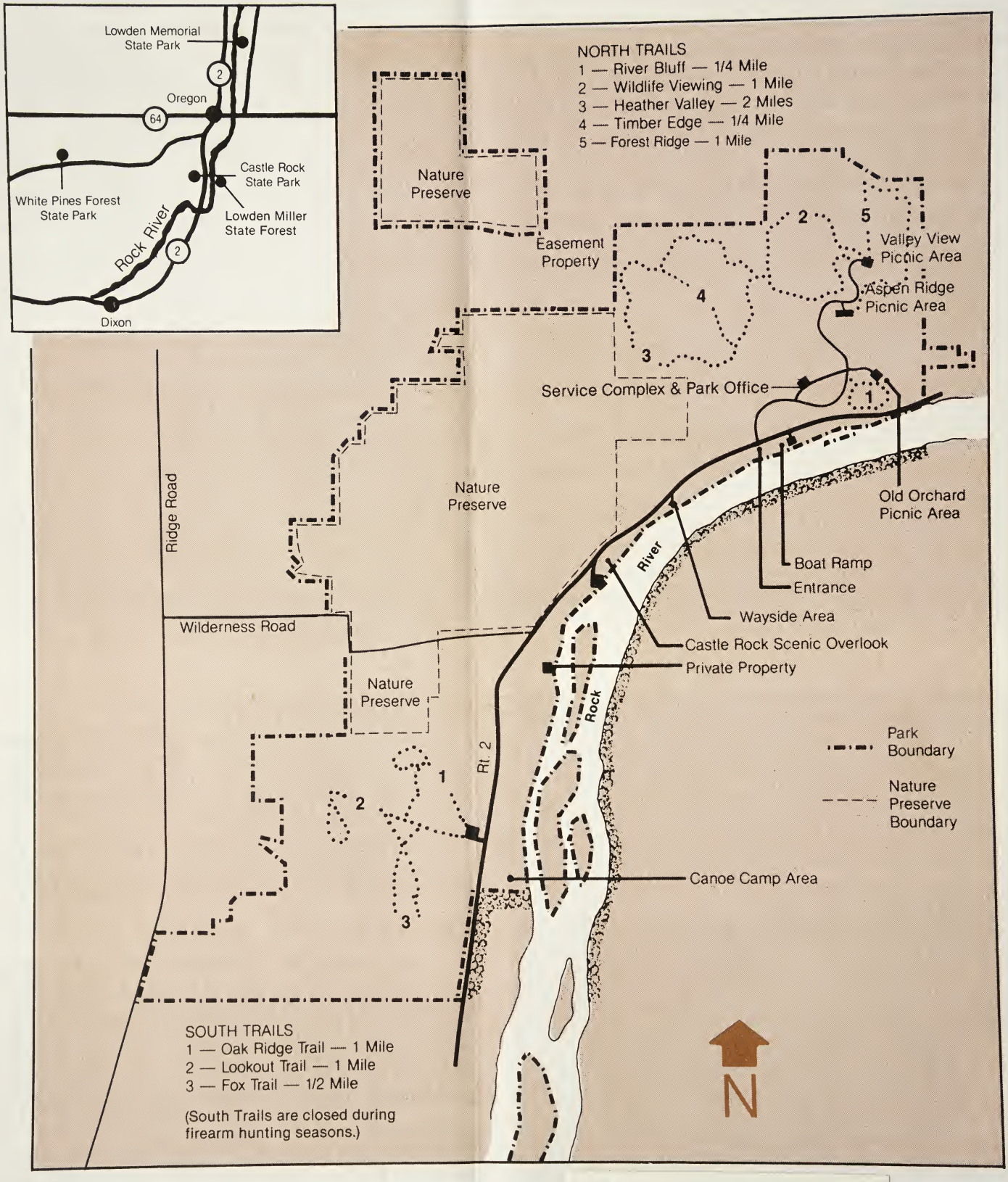
Future Development

Projected development at Castle Rock includes more picnic areas and a campground. The development of the campground will be limited to keep the area in its natural setting and will also include primitive tent campsites.

More trails will be developed which will link various areas of the park, and signs will guide pedestrians through the park.

For Your Information

It is your responsibility to be aware of the rules and regulations at this site. This area is for all to enjoy, so please help keep it clean. All vehicles must remain on existing roadways and parking lots. No plants, flower, shrubs, or trees may be removed or damaged. Fires are permitted only in camp stoves located in the picnic area. Please consider the results if others treat the park as you do.



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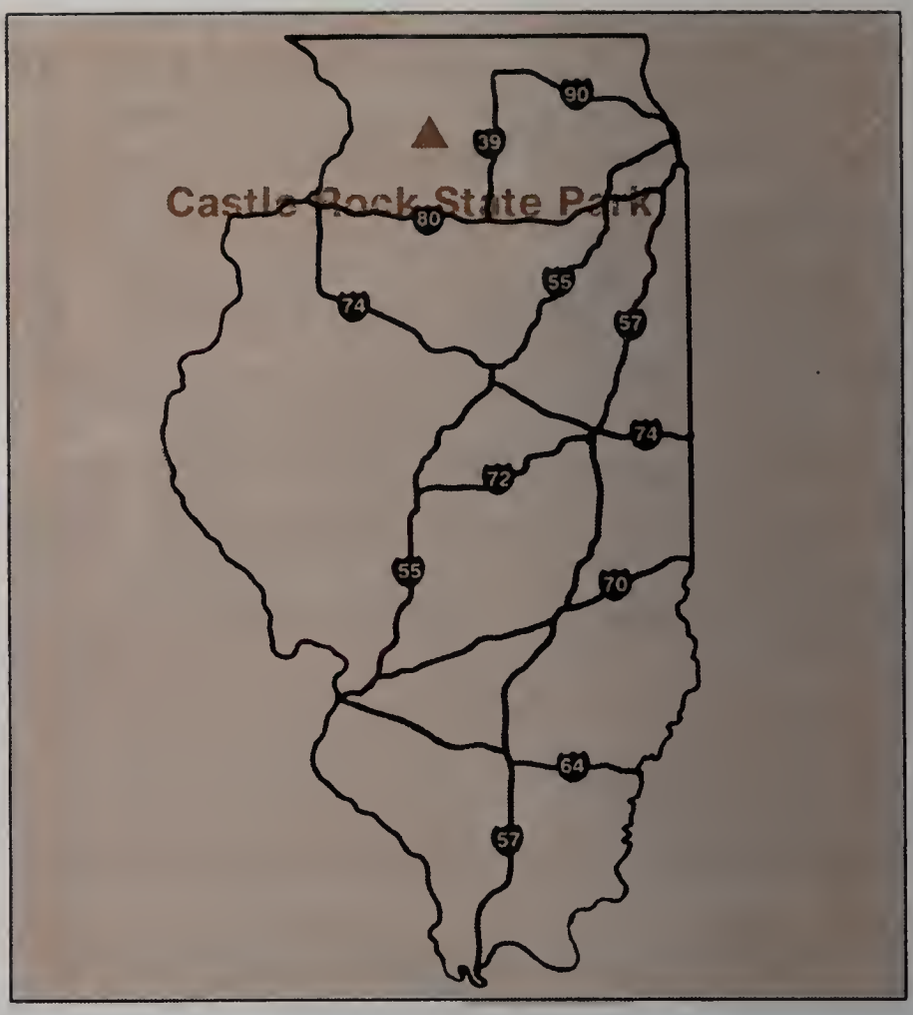

Castle Rock State Park

1365 W. Castle Road, Oregon, Ill. 61061, 815-732-7329

- While groups of 25 or more are welcome and encouraged to use the park's facilities, they are required to register in advance with the site office to avoid crowding or scheduling conflicts.
- At least one responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors.
- Pets must be kept on leashes at all times.
- Actions by nature can result in closed roads and other facilities. Please call ahead to the park office before you make your trip.
- We hope you enjoy your stay. Remember, take only memories, leave only footprints.
- For more information on state parks write to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Office of Resource Marketing, 524 S. Second St., Springfield, Ill., 62701-1787, or call (217) 782-7454.
- For more information on tourism in Illinois, call the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, Bureau of Tourism at 1-800-226-6632 (1-800-2-CONNECT).
- Telecommunications Device for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Natural Resources Information **(217) 782-9175 for TDD only** Ameritech Relay Number 800-526-0844

Jim Edgar
Governor

Brent Manning
Director, Dept. of Natural Resources

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